

# Information for Commercial and Non-Commercial Importers of Nursery Stock, Plants, Roots, Bulbs, Seeds, and Other Propagative Plant Products

In recent years, the amounts of nursery stock, plants, and other propagative plant material, like bulbs and seeds, imported into the United States has grown dramatically. The expanded trade in these commodities has placed a greater demand on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) inspection services. It has also presented new challenges in better understanding the pests and potential pest risks associated with the importation of these commodities from a wider variety of sources. Consequently, the need for verifiable information provided in a phytosanitary certificate, or similar documents deemed acceptable by USDA, has become vital with respect to each shipment of nursery stock, plants, and other propagative plant material.

USDA will therefore begin consistently and routinely enforcing an existing requirement that a phytosanitary certificate of inspection, or similar documentation approved by USDA, accompany these restricted articles, other than certain greenhouse-grown and stickered plants or specially certified seeds from Canada, that are offered for importation into the United States under our foreign quarantine regulations for nursery stock, plants, roots, bulbs, seeds, and other plant products (7 CFR 319.37).

This action, which will begin on January 22, 2002, is necessary to more effectively mitigate the risk of introducing foreign plant pests that could damage agricultural production and natural resources of the United States. The policy will become effective for seeds arriving from Canada through the mail on July 22, 2002.

Importers should check with their broker, vendor, or greenhouse to determine if the facility is part of the greenhouse or seed certification program in Canada

that produces exempted greenhouse-grown plants or certified seeds. Information about the certification program in Canada can also be found at the following Web site: [www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/d-96-12e.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/d-96-12e.shtml). Seed shipments arriving from Canada may be accompanied by either a phytosanitary certificate issued by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), or a seed analysis certificate (SAC) issued by an authorized laboratory.

All other nursery stock, plants, roots, bulbs, seeds, and other plant products must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the plant health officials where the product originated in order to be considered for entry into the United States.

## What are Phytosanitary Certificates?

A phytosanitary certificate documents the origin of the shipment and confirms inspection in the country of origin by a member of that country's national plant protection organization. This helps ensure that the shipment of commodities is free of injurious plant pests and diseases. The certifying country usually charges a fee for providing these certificates.

Phytosanitary certificates are governed under the International Plant Protection Convention, a multilateral treaty acknowledged by the World Trade Organization as the source for international standards for phytosanitary measures affecting trade. Phytosanitary certificates are recognized as an internationally accepted form of pest risk mitigation.

## Summary

This action does not entail new regulatory requirements. Rather, its goal is to enforce, beginning on January 22, 2002, an existing phytosanitary certificate requirement on a mandatory, consistent basis. Importers and members of the general public will not be allowed to import restricted nursery stock, plants, or other propagative plant material into the United States without an accompanying phytosanitary certificate—unless the items are certain greenhouse-grown and stickered plants or specially certified seeds from Canada. Phytosanitary certificates must be obtained from an official agency of the country where the goods originate.

For questions on this regulation, contact the USDA state plant health director nearest you. A list of USDA offices can be found in the phone book or on the Internet at [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov). Click on "plant health," and then on "directories and general information."

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